

surveying common frogs (*Rana temporaria*) and newts (*Triturus cristatus*, *T. helveticus* and *T. vulgaris*). JNCC Report No. 259. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

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New records of Palmate Newts (*Lissotriton helveticus*) in Cambridge

Steven J. R. Allain & Mark J. Goodman

Palmate Newts (*Lissotriton helveticus*) are relatively rare in Cambridgeshire with only a few isolated populations known to exist within the county. They are the smallest of the native UK newt species (Beebee & Griffiths, 2000) and prefer acidic bodies of water that are usually associated with heathland and moorland (Inns, 2009). One reason Cambridgeshire is lacking in Palmate Newts may be a lack of suitable habitat. Nonetheless, populations do occur and new ones are being discovered. The species may be more abundant than previously thought due to confusion with Smooth Newts (*L. vulgaris*). The two species are very similar in size and colouration, with the females being almost identical from a dorsal viewpoint. This confusion may lead to Palmate Newt populations erroneously being misidentified as Smooth Newts, which are far more common and widespread within Cambridgeshire.

We report on a newly discovered population of Palmate Newts (**Plate 2**, inside front cover) found in the gardens of private residences in central Cambridge. The newts were first seen on the 21st May 2017 whilst conducting a Midwife Toad (*Alytes obstetricans*) survey. Three individuals were observed in a garden pond whilst dipping in the hope of finding the larvae of the Midwife Toad. The three individuals captured were two males in full breeding condition and a female. Two days later, on the 23rd May, three more Palmate Newts were observed in a neighbouring pond. This time there was only one male, but two females. All of the Palmate Newts found were visually checked over for any signs of disease or ill health, before being photographed and returned to the ponds from which they were removed.

Surveys of the gardens where the newts were found have been made since the spring of 2015 (Allain & Goodman, 2017). These two instances are the only times in which we have found Palmate Newts within the ponds or in the gardens. Other amphibians inhabiting the area include the Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) and the Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) as well as the species listed above. These are the first records of Palmate Newts for central Cambridge and they were found in the

same restricted area as the Midwife Toads. It is for this reason that we wish to keep the exact location secret; however we can disclose that the properties are in the Mill Road area. The Palmate Newts too are likely to have been introduced although further analysis (via genetic methods) will be needed to confirm this. Unusually the Palmate Newts were not seen on subsequent surveys so perhaps they have been sheltering in the nearby environment and only visit the ponds to breed. This isn't surprising as the ponds are quite small, meaning that there is likely to be a high level of competition between the five amphibian species utilising them to breed.

Despite the fact that the Palmate Newts were in full breeding condition, no eggs or larvae have been observed since the surveys in May 2017. We will be making extra efforts to relocate the individuals in subsequent springs to monitor their progress. Due to the circumstances, the newts may in fact not be breeding in the ponds but instead be using them as stepping stones to get from their hibernation site or sites to their actual breeding pond or ponds. If this is true then further surveys in the surrounding area will need to be conducted to see how far the Palmate Newt population is dispersed. We are aware that there is a lot of speculation here and further investigation is needed before the full status of this population is known. but their presence has intrigued us since their discovery. Our follow up surveys will investigate whether or not the Midwife Toads are having a negative effect on the Palmate Newt's breeding success by predation of their eggs and larvae. All records have been submitted to CPERC.

References

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Survey of Animal Road Casualties in the rural area surrounding Cambridge

Karsten Koehler

Abstract

Recording of roadkill can provide information about the distribution of animals in a specific area and might help in reducing collisions in the future. Two road sections were monitored for animal road casualties. Firstly, a 10 km stretch north of Cambridge, between Fen Ditton and Waterbeach was surveyed for 11 months. A total of 148 dead animals was recorded here, most prominently Rabbits (37 animals found), Grey Squirrels (29), Wood Pigeons (17), Pheasants (10), Hedgehogs (9) and Blackbirds (9). Secondly, a 5 km road stretch between Cambridge and Babraham was surveyed for 15 months, with 92 animals found,